

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 07265 101519Z

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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INFO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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PASS AGRICULTURE, FAS, FOR GRAIN AND FEED

E.O. 11652: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

STAGS: EAGR, CZ

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK HARVEST DEVELOPING DIFFICULTIES

1. AGATT TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY IN EASTERN PART OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA (SLOVAKIA) AUG 3-4 COVERING MAJOR GRAIN PRODUCING REGIONS. HARVEST IS NEARING TO END AND IS MOVING TO WESTERN PART OF THE COUNTRY (CZECH LAND).

2. SLOVAKIA WHICH PRODUCES ONE-THIRD OF NATION'S GRAIN CROP

HAD A TARGET OF 3.4 MILLION TONS FOR 1977. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THIS TONNAGE WILL BE MET ALTHOUGH A GOOD PORTION OF THE CROP- ABOUT .8 TO .9 MILLION TONS CORN- IS STILL TO BE HARVESTED IN THE FALL.

3. LOCAL SOURCES REVEAL THAT SMALL GRAIN CROP IN SLOVAKIA WAS ABOUT 10 PERCENT OFF RECORD YIELD IN 1976. AT HEIGHT OF HARVEST SLOVAK PARTY

DAILY PRAVDA IN ITS EDITORIAL OF JULY 13 ALREADY SEEMED PREPARING THE PUBLIC FOR DISAPPOINTING HARVEST IN THIS REGION DUE TO ADVERSE WEATHER.

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4. ONE WEEK LATER AN EDITORIAL IN THE CZECH PARTY DAILY RUDE PRAVO

LIKEWISE DISCUSSED THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF BAD WEATHER, CREATING DIFFICULTIES FOR HARVEST. THE CZECH LAND WITH TARGETED 6.6 MILL. TONS OF THE NATION'S 10 MILLION TONS GRAIN IS HAVING NOW ADDITIONAL DIFFICULTIES. THE EXTREMELY HEAVY RAINS THAT FELL AT THE END

OF JULY JUST BEFORE THE HARVEST BEGAN FLATTENED LARGE PARTS OF THE FIELD IN THE MAJOR GRAIN GROWING AREAS. IN SOME DISTRICTS REPORTEDLY 80 PERCENT OF THE GRAIN WAS LODGED. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES COMBINE OPERATIONS WILL BE SLOW WITH CONSEQUENCE OF HEAVIER THAN USUAL LOSSES OF GRAIN DURING HARVEST.

5. COMMENTS. AT THIS TIME IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE THE IMPACT OF THE RECENT BAD WEATHER ON YIELDS, SINCE HALF OF THE NATION'S GRAIN IS STILL IN THE FIELD. NEVERTHELESS IT NOW APPEARS DOUBTFUL THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA CAN MEET ITS 10 MILLION TON GRAIN TARGET UNLESS AN UNUSUALLY GOOD CORN CROP DEVELOPS. THE AREA SOWN THIS YEAR TO ALL GRAIN AMOUNTED TO 2,732,000 HECTARES WHICH INCLUDED 203,000 HECTARES OF CORN LEAVING 2,529,000 HECTARES TO SMALL GRAIN. THE RECENT HEAVY RAINS AND STORMS MAKE IT ALSO DOUBTFUL THAT ALL THE ACREAGE THAT WAS SOWN TO GRAIN CAN BE HARVESTED.

6. THE CURRENT PUBLICITY ABOUT THE 100 PERCENT FULFILMENT OF GRAIN DELEVERIES INTO STATE FUNDS BY SLOVAKIAN AGRICULTURE IS NOT NECESSARILY A GOOD INDICION TO THE AMOUNT OF GRAIN HARVESTED. THERE IS COMMON PRACTICE AMONG FARM MANAGERS TO REPORT LOWER PRODUCTION IN GOOD YEARS (1976) AND USE THE OLD CROP TO FULFILL THEIR QUOTA IN BAD YEARS (1977).

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7. AGATT PLANS TO MEET CZECHOSLOVAK MINAG OFFICIALS LATER THIS MONTH. WILL REPORT RESULTS. BORG

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